

Office of Communication of the
United Church of Christ, Inc. (OC, Inc.)
919 18th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20006

November 11, 2005

Ms. Shirley Rocker, Chair
FCC Consumer Advisory Committee
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, SW
Washington, DC

Dear Ms. Rocker,

We are writing to urge the FCC Consumer Advisory Committee (“CAC”) to recommend to the Federal Communications Commission (“Commission”) to complete final Reports and Orders within the next six months in the following proceedings critical to American consumers and the public interest:

- Public Interest Obligations of TV Broadcast Licensees, MM Docket No. 99-360;
- Standardized an Enhanced Disclosure Requirements for Television Broadcast Licensee Public Interest Obligations, MM Docket No. 00-168; and
- Review of the Emergency Alert System, EB Docket No. 04-296.

The Public Interest proceedings are important to the completion of the digital transition and to ensuring that broadcasters give the public meaningful and quantifiable public discourse over the digital airwaves in exchange for their exclusive use of the public airwaves. The completion of these proceedings is long overdue.

The completion of the Emergency Alert System proceeding, and in which the Commission took initial steps earlier this month, is critical to the health and safety of Americans in emergency situations. The recent natural disasters, which included devastating hurricanes and of late, horrifying tornadoes, underscore the need to have in place every possible measure and use of telecommunication capabilities to help save lives and salvage property.

The Office of Communication of the United Church of Christ, Inc. (OC, Inc.) has been advocating for the public interest for more than forty years and on behalf of those historically excluded from the media, especially women and

people of color. OC, Inc. is concerned about the prolonged decline of local civic and electoral discourse over the public airwaves, and has recommended requirements that broadcasters air minimum amounts of programming that enriches our civil and electoral discourse. We are also concerned about the need to have available transparent information regarding the programming broadcasters provide to their local communities. We have participated continuously in the above mentioned public interest dockets because we understand that an informed citizenry is at the core of our democracy. After more than six years and with the digital transition in full swing, the Commission must act to complete these proceedings.

OC, Inc. also recognizes that the public interest, consumer protection, and the reality of natural and other disasters, argue for expansion and use of EAS to better inform Americans before, during and after emergencies. We are concerned that significant populations, whose primary language is not English, may have not received warnings and critical information regarding emergencies. Just recently the Commission sought further comment on Multilingual EAS Messages. OC, Inc., together with other parties, submitted a Petition for Immediate Relief proposing that stations air EAS messages in other languages in addition to English. We appreciate the Commission seeking further comment on this and other proposals regarding how to best alert non-English speakers in emergency situations. It is critical, however, that the Commission completes the EAS proceedings expeditiously.

We urge the CAC to also recommend to the Commission that it redouble its efforts to safeguard and expand access for Americans with disabilities by, among other things, ensuring the continuity and reliability of closed captioning and video description for all programming but especially for emergency warnings and emergency information.

We understand the CAC will be holding a public meeting on November 18, 2005 to discuss various matters and take action. We thank all the members of the CAC for your service and again urge you to adopt the above recommendations.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Gloria Tristani".

Gloria Tristani, Managing Director
Office of Communication of the
The United Church of Christ, Inc. (OC, Inc.)
tristang@ucc.org

cc: Rev. Robert Chase, Executive Director
OC, Inc.